



The mitzva to say Birkat HaMazon after eating a satisfying meal (with HaMotzi) is found in Parshat Eikev.

The pasuk that commands it is D'varim 8:10. This pasuk is quoted in the benching and is well-known to all who sing Birkat HaMazon.

And it is the singing of that pasuk that pushes us to review and fine-tune our pronunciation (specifically, accenting) of some of the words.

Towards the end of the second bracha of the Benching, we say/sing

KAKATUV, as it is written,

V'ACHALTA, V'SAVATA, UVEIRACHTA...

Using uppercase letters for the accented syllables and lowercase letters for the syllables that are not accented, we have ka-ka-TUV (saying ka-KA-tuv is wrong, but doesn't change the meaning of the word.

But v'a-chal-TA and u-vei-rach-TA are accented on their last syllables - and not doing so changes the meaning of the words.

a-CHAL-ta means you ate (past tense)

v'a-CHAL-ta means and you ate - conjunctive VAV, tense stays past.

In order for the VAV to flip the tense from past to future (or command), the accent goes from MILEIL to MILRA. v'a-chal-TA means and you will eat, which is what the pasuk says.

Same for u'vei-rach-TA

But not so for v'sa-VA-ta.

Following the same rule, that the VAV HAHIPUCH (the tense-flipping VAV) is not only prefixed to the verb but also causes its accent to move from next-to-the-last syllable to the last syllable, the middle of the three words should be v'sa-va-TA. But it isn't. The word in question is at the end of a pasuk or at an etnachta (both full stops), the accent does not shift. D'varim 8:10 states: v'a-chal-TA (and you will eat) v'sa-VA-ta (and be satisfied), pause, then u'vei-rach-TA (then you shall bless HaShem for the good Land which He gives you. (There are other exceptions.)